

## Executive Summary

It is the primary goal of the Heritage Preservation Plan to facilitate the identification, preservation and promotion of the County's heritage resources. The Plan explores three principal means of achieving this goal: resource protection, community education and heritage tourism.

The majority of the County's heritage resources are located on private property. Many are homes to Loudoun residents and one of the best methods of preservation is continued care through use. Recognizing this, the Heritage Preservation Plan focuses plan implementation on programmatic, incentive-based and education oriented strategies. The Plan is a tool to assist property owners in efforts to protect and preserve heritage resources.

As a primary implementation recommendation, the Plan calls for the creation of a Heritage Commission to bring together public and private preservation interests active in the County and spearhead community education and heritage tourism efforts. The Heritage Commission is the appropriate body to establish revolving funds and channel monies from the County's expanding heritage tourism program into a variety of preservation efforts.

The Plan addresses the need for government action to protect significant resources threatened by development pressures with the recognition that an expansion of state enabling legislation is necessary to do so effectively.

The Plan contains policies and implementation strategies that aim to preserve the County's many remaining resources and its successful implementation ultimately rests in the hands of the community. Heritage preservation should be undertaken on behalf of the citizens of the County. The stakeholders in this endeavor; property owners, land developers, local government, preservation groups and interested citizens, must have viable and creative tools to be good stewards of their heritage resources. The adoption and implementation of the Heritage Preservation Plan provides such tools and focuses efforts to ensure the future of our shared past.

*Whether we are leaving it or coming to it, it is here that matters, it is place. Whether we understand where we are or don't, that is the story. Storytelling is as old as our need to remember where the water is, where the best food grows, where we find our courage for the hunt. It is as persistent as our desire to teach our children how to live in this place that we have known longer than they have. Our greatest and smallest explanations for ourselves grow from place, as surely as carrots grow in the dirt. ....*

*Among the greatest of all gifts is to know our place. (Barbara Kingsolver, Small Wonders, 2002)*



*Lincoln, Virginia*

## Preface

*"A country with no respect for its past will do little worth remembering in the future."  
(Abraham Lincoln)*

Loudoun County is located at the northern-most end of the State of Virginia, nestled among the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and adjacent to the historic Potomac River. Loudoun has a greater variety of documented heritage resources than any other county in Virginia, as is evidenced by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources' archives. Loudoun County's rich geologic and environmental resources provided natural prehistoric settlement areas, particularly along the County's watercourses and upland terraces. The ridges and valleys of the County have been traversed for thousands of years, first by Native Americans traveling between winter and summer camps, and later by settlers traveling north and south along the Old Carolina Road and east and west along the earliest turnpikes during the western frontier movement. These both facilitated the exploration and settlement that occurred in the early 18th century. Vestiges of these population movements and settlement areas remain, as do the natural resources that first attracted humans to the area. All of these elements assure the progress and development of Loudoun County making it one of the most desirable places in Virginia to live and work.

The natural and historic resources that characterize Loudoun face serious threats. Rapid development, unsympathetic to existing resources, threatens the County's heritage sites and will ultimately contribute to the diminution of the County's heritage. Despite past losses and the prospect of unending threats, the heritage resources in Loudoun County remain significant and permit cautious optimism that the citizens of the County will secure a future distinctly richer and more diverse than the homogenized landscape of rapid-growth suburbia.

In recognition of the real and potential loss of heritage resources in the face of unprecedented population growth and development, the voters of Loudoun County provided the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors with a mandate to manage growth. In response, the Board of Supervisors adopted the County's Revised General Plan in July 2001. A goal of the Revised General Plan is to preserve "our historic and environmental heritage and the character of our towns and neighborhoods; fostering a strong sense of community, with robust economic, educational and recreational activity; (so that) the County is recognized as a superb place for families and individuals to live, learn, work, worship, invest and visit."

In 2002 the Board of Supervisors appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to draft a heritage preservation plan. The committee, comprised of interested citizens and preservation professionals, began its work early in 2003. Each member has brought valuable insight and broad perspectives to the task of defining, preserving and promoting the County's rich heritage resources. Additionally, a team of staff from various county departments and related agencies, such as the Loudoun Convention and Visitors Association, has lent technical support to the CAC. Most importantly, the drafting of the plan has been a public process. The CAC has sought guidance from local and regional preservation experts, private preservation organizations, preservation community leaders and the general public. Public input sessions were held on March 10, and September 9, 2003 to garner public comment on the draft plan.

The Heritage Preservation Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in December, 2003.



## What does the Preservation Plan mean for Property Owners?

Preservation efforts in Loudoun succeed because individual landowners, volunteer groups and companies see a benefit to preserving and using our heritage resources appropriately. The Preservation Plan reinforces preservation efforts pertaining to the protection and development of the property.

### Resource inventory

An inventory of heritage properties aids in identifying and determining the value of the resource and its eligibility for Federal, State and local tax relief programs. The County will offer educational and technical support for property owners interested in evaluating their resources.

A County Heritage Registry program will expand public awareness and support of preservation by acknowledging and rewarding participating owners through technical and financial assistance.

### Maintaining or improving property

Several policies of the Plan speak to providing design assistance to landowners. A Design Resource Center will assist people proposing the adaptive reuse of their heritage resource. A County certification program will be defined and established to give County certification to a pool of craftsmen specializing in restoration and preservation of heritage sites in Loudoun County.

State and federal programs offer tax relief to homeowners to rehabilitate or maintain eligible historic properties. The Preservation Plan proposes expanding a local real estate tax deferral program, currently available only to people who own older homes in Sterling and Sugarland Run, to heritage properties throughout the County. Participation in any of these programs is voluntary.

### Historic districts

The Plan recommends that existing historic overlay zoning district boundaries be modified to align with State and National Register Historic District boundaries and that district guidelines be updated to reflect new circumstances and technology. The Plan supports State legislation that would allow regulations to protect heritage properties outside of historic districts. The mechanism to create new historic overlay zoning districts is unchanged. The Plan supports citizen efforts to identify new districts.

### New development

Subdivisions will continue to require an archaeological survey. In addition, the Plan recommends a Context Analysis Report in some cases. Both together will provide a complete picture of any resources on or near a property that merit special consideration during the review process.

Conservation design guidelines, where applicable, will be used to protect identified heritage resources. Predictive models will help identify sites with a potential for archaeological resources.

The Plan proposes design guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with identified heritage resources. These guidelines are not to be imposed by ordinance but offered as recommendations through the legislative development review process (rezonings, special exceptions...).

**Heritage tourism incentives**

The Plan offers technical support and financial incentives to heritage tourism efforts through a Heritage Commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Inappropriate ordinance standards that might impede new heritage business development will be identified and recommended for removal to ease the process of starting appropriate heritage businesses.

## Heritage Preservation in Loudoun County: Past and Present

### Where We've Been

Loudoun County has a long history of heritage preservation. In recognition of the scenic vistas along Loudoun's roadways, initial preservation efforts were aimed at retaining the rural, historic landscape by regulating roadway signs and billboards. The 1930's and 40's saw the proliferation of large roadway signs and billboards that obstructed the scenic views. A group of preservation-minded county residents, under the leadership of the Leesburg Garden Club and Loudoun's first Planning Commission Chairman, Vinton Pickens of Janelia Farm, spearheaded the idea for the regulation of roadway signs. As a result, the County's first sign ordinance was adopted in 1942.

Historic District	Local Designation	State Landmark	National Register	National Landmark
<b>County</b>				
Aldie	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Bluemont	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Catoctin Rural	No	Yes	No	
Goose Creek	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Oatlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paeonian Springs	No	Yes	Yes	
Taylorstown	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Unison	No	Yes	Yes	
Waterford	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Towns</b>				
Hillsboro	No	Yes	Yes	
Leesburg	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Middleburg	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Purcellville	Yes	Yes	Yes	

*Historic District Designations*

In 1972, the County established the Historic and Cultural Conservation (HCC) Districts as zoning overlay districts. Subsequently, the County recognized the Aldie, Oatlands and Waterford HCC districts in 1972, the Taylorstown district in 1976 and the Goose Creek Rural Historic District in 1977. As one of the first rural historic districts created in the state, the Goose Creek District was formed to preserve not only the historic architecture of the area but also the surrounding rural, agricultural landscape. In spite of Loudoun's preservation efforts, the zoning within the district has allowed suburban style development to occur. In 1988 the Bluemont Historic District was created and in 2002, the County's first Historic Roadways District, known as the Beaverdam Creek Historic Roadways District, was formed in the southwestern portion of the County. The Towns of Leesburg, Middleburg and Purcellville also administer local historic districts.



As evidence of the vast and significant resources of the County, to date 70 sites and districts are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These sites include each of the eight local historic districts mentioned above as well as the Town of Hillsboro and the villages of Unison and Paeonian Springs. Five of these National Register properties have also been designated National Historic Landmarks, the highest honor the federal government can bestow on a historic site. The County's National Historic Landmarks are Balls Bluff Battlefield, Dodona Manor, Oak Hill, Oatlands and the village of Waterford. Sadly, the integrity of several of these resources, particularly Oatlands and the village of Waterford are threatened by rapid suburban development.

North of Leesburg, the Catocin Rural Historic District is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register. Although the district is eligible for listing in the National Register, at the time of evaluation, there was a lack of community support for National Register recognition. In 2001, a portion of the village of Ashburn in eastern Loudoun was evaluated and deemed eligible for inclusion in the National Register but like the Catocin Rural Historic District, sufficient community support was lacking. The Town of Purcellville has established a National Register District, while Hamilton, Lovettsville and Round Hill are in the process of evaluating their eligibility for inclusion in the National Register. In 1993, the Federal government completed a nation-wide study of some 10,500 armed conflicts related to the Civil War and identified 384 of the most significant or "principle battles." Four of these "principle battles" took place in Loudoun County and are represented in the battlefield sites of Aldie, Middleburg, Upperville and Balls Bluff.

Despite the rich resource base or perhaps because of it, the County still finds itself confronting daily attacks on our heritage resources, incurring tragic losses. The rural agricultural landscape and unique brick bank barn of Shenstone Farm west of Leesburg, the African American Settlement of Cooksville south of Purcellville, the Grenata (Elgin) House on Evergreen Mill Road southeast of Leesburg and the historic landscape related to Selma Plantation, along Route 15 north of Leesburg are just a few of examples of significant losses. Both Waterford and Oatlands are struggling with encroaching development. Many of the County's successful preservation efforts have been achieved through the last minute heroics of individuals and cooperative landowners. The Settle Dean site, in the southeastern part of the County, was preserved through long negotiations with a developer who was willing to invest significant private funds to assess and move the structure. These events have underscored the need for a strategic plan specific to the issue of heritage preservation.

The adoption of the Revised General Plan in July 2001 significantly expanded and strengthened the County's regulatory standards. Heritage resources are now considered part of the County's Green Infrastructure, the interconnecting network of natural and cultural features throughout the County. Viewing natural and cultural resources as related heritage resources is a new and innovative approach to resource protection. Within the development process, the Revised General Plan calls for the use of Conservation Design as the primary method of preserving and enhancing the County's Green Infrastructure, including significant heritage resources.

In addition, the Revised General Plan places a greater emphasis on preserving archaeological resources as part of the Green Infrastructure, calling for archaeological surveys to be conducted as part of the development process. These policies are manifest by regulation in both the County's Zoning Ordinance and Facilities Standards Manual, governing by-right development. The Heritage Preservation Plan reinforces the vision of the Revised General Plan, recognizing that the County's heritage is comprised of both natural and cultural assets.

In 2002 the Board of Supervisors appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to draft a Heritage Preservation Plan. The purpose of this plan is to implement the Heritage Resource Policies of the Revised General Plan. The Heritage Preservation Plan provides an overview of the heritage resources and preservation challenges unique to the County and provides policy guidance and implementation

strategies to citizens, landowners, developers and County staff to achieve rewarding and appropriate resource preservation.

**LOUDOUN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS’  
VISION FOR LOUDOUN COUNTY  
Adopted April 3, 2000**

*“At the start of this new millennium, we, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, envision Loudoun County as a prominent sustainable community; as the global crossroads of the information technology industry and as a vibrant rural and broad based economy; preserving our historic and environmental heritage and the character of our towns and neighborhoods; fostering a strong sense of community, with robust economic, educational and recreational activity; recognized as a superb place for families and individuals to live, learn, work, worship, invest and visit.”*

The Preservation Plan recognizes that there are a great number of groups and individuals already investing time and money in protecting the array of historic and natural resources in the County. Successful preservation efforts rely largely on the decisions and investments of individual landowners, volunteer groups and companies who recognize the value of their heritage and act to save it and use it appropriately. Many of the Plan’s recommended actions and programs are intended to support existing groups in their preservation, educational and heritage tourism efforts.

In identifying the priority actions, the Preservation Plan seeks to move forward while minimizing new public costs. The costs associated with the following “Phase 1” implementation actions come from redirecting or adding to the responsibilities of existing staff and the formation of a Heritage Commission to develop detailed implementation strategies. As implementation efforts progress, new resources may be needed.



## Phase 1 Actions

**Establish a Heritage Commission**, consisting of members such as staff from various County agencies, (including the Heritage Resource Center) interested citizens, stakeholders and experts in preservation, historic architecture, archaeology, battlefields, museum/historic site administration, history, environment, finance, arts and crafts, folklore, farming and husbandry, education, libraries, museums, archives, journalism, and heritage tourism to undertake specific implementation assignments and to provide the coordinating function between public and private sector groups.

The Commission will play a significant role in fund raising and education and resource identification. The Plan recommends that, over time, the Heritage Commission become the principal link between public and private sectors and undertake action that may be most appropriate outside the scope of existing County operations. It is envisioned, however that the Heritage Commission will work closely with County staff, particularly when County resources, policies, regulations and procedures would be affected by Commission activities.

The formation of a Heritage Commission will ensure that the 250th anniversary of the founding of Loudoun County and Leesburg and the statewide celebration of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown is a springboard for the County to realize the full potential economic benefit of heritage preservation and tourism. To this end the Heritage Commission should initially undertake three specific tasks:

1. **Establish a County Heritage Register** to highlight significant resources. By increasing community awareness of the resources, this program will encourage a higher level of stewardship and support preservation efforts in the County. The program will broaden the definition of heritage resources beyond historic standing structures and archaeological sites, to include geological formations, cultural landscapes, such as battlefields, cemeteries, ruins and significant trees.
2. **Initiate the County Stewardship Program** to put in place management plans for all County-owned properties and ensure appropriate protection, maintenance and interpretation of heritage resources on each property. This effort should coincide with the Heritage Commission's development of a Countywide Strategic Acquisition and Stewardship Plan outlining broader policies for the acquisition and management of public property.
3. **Initiate community outreach and education programs** to educate residents of the County's heritage resources and preservation programs. The Preservation Plan recommends including the following actions in the Phase 1 implementation actions:
  - Begin countywide education and community awareness program with County departments, private groups and the Public Schools Administration;
  - Expand the glossary of terms in the Preservation Plan;
  - Create a web page specific to the Preservation Plan;
  - Conduct community outreach meetings;
  - Create written materials (eg. brochures) for distribution.

Phase 1 actions that specifically require County implementation efforts in coordination with the Heritage Commission include the following:



1. **Amend the Historic District Boundaries and Guidelines** to reflect changing the character of the districts and to align federal, state and local historic district boundaries. Updated guidelines and boundary adjustments will offer better protection and more appropriate design review. The guidelines have not been reviewed since their adoption in 1987.
2. **Integrate preservation efforts into the County's Development Review Process** to better protect resources. Working within the current Conservation Design review process, this preservation focus is intended to facilitate resource protection through early identification and clear guidelines for review and preservation.
3. **Train staff** in the various County departments involved in the review of land development applications and the management of heritage properties in the identification and preservation of heritage resources.
4. **Review and amend the County's Revised 1993 Zoning Ordinance** to facilitate resource protection and promote heritage tourism efforts.
5. **Amend existing County programs**, such as the County's Residential Rehabilitation Program and the Land Use Assessment Program to facilitate heritage resource protection. The Preservation Plan recommends expanding the scope of the Residential Rehabilitation Program to apply to heritage properties countywide and reducing the minimum area requirement of the Land Use Assessment Program to encourage property owners to take advantage of these programs.
6. **Amend the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) and Land Management Information System (LMIS)** to facilitate heritage resource identification and protection. This is intended to serve both the public and county staff in the review of land development applications. All parcels that are within and/or contiguous to County Historic Districts (and potentially federal, state and local historic districts and the County Heritage Register) will be identified on the County GIS and LMIS Systems. The County will develop a predictive model for determining high probability areas for archaeological sites and corridor viewshed maps for designated high priority cultural landscapes in the County. The LMIS database will identify parcels within the viewsheds of designated priority heritage corridors.
7. **Strengthen the County's Grant Writing Assistance Program** to assist individuals and organizations in heritage resource preservation.
8. **Seek State enabling legislation** to implement program and policy recommendations included in the Heritage Preservation Plan. The Preservation Plan recommends seeking state enabling legislation to allow the transfer of development rights and increase the County's authority to require the protection of historic structures and archaeological sites that are outside County designated historic districts.